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CONSTRUCTIVE STUDIES IN THE LITERATURE OF WORSHIP IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

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II. THE LEGAL LITERATURE — EZEKIEL'S CONTRIBUTION.

§ 182. **The Historical Situation** of which Ezekiel and his work formed a part deserves careful study (§§ 30 ff.).[1]

1. Gather together the principal facts (1) of the *first* deportation as narrated in Kings, viz., the reign of Jehoiakim, its character; the reign of Jehoiachin, the invasion of Nebuchadnezzar, the carrying away of the princes, etc. (vs. 14); the date of this being 597 B. C.; (2) of the *second* deportation, including the reign of Zedekiah, the siege of Jerusalem, its destruction, the carrying away of the residue (vs. 11). 2 Kings 24: 1–7. 2 Kings 25: 1–21; Jer., chap. 52.

2. Note (1) the situation after the destruction of the city under Gedaliah, and the story of Gedaliah's murder; (2) the prophet's estimate of those taken away captive and those allowed to remain (the good and the bad figs), and consider (*a*) whether it was the captives or those left behind who were adjudged the more important; also (*b*) which of these two classes was supposed to be suffering the more keenly; still further (*c*), how the lower classes left behind regarded these matters. 2 Kings 25: 22–26. Jer., chap. 24; 29: 15–20. Ezek. 11: 14–21; Jer., chaps. 42–44. Ezek. 33: 24 f.

3. Study Jeremiah's letter[2] to the captives in Babylon Jer., chap. 29.

[1] See MCCURDY, *History, Prophecy and the Monuments*, Vol. III, pp. 227–431; WELLHAUSEN, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel*, pp. 488–98; STADE, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, Vol. I, pp. 675–703; II, 1–67; GUTHE, art. "Israel," §§ 40–47, *Encyclopædia Biblica*, Vol. II.

[2] It is very probable that Jer., chap. 29, at least in its present form, is from a later writer, for: (1) Jeremiah is spoken of in the third person and described "as the prophet;" (2) the nature of the advice given suggests that it comes from one looking back upon the conditions he is dealing with, rather than one living in the midst of movements the outcome of which was still uncertain; (3) the booklet, chaps. 26–29, bears marks of late workmanship, linguistic and otherwise. See, *e. g.*, SCHMIDT, art. "Jeremiah," *Encyclopædia Biblica;* DUHM, *Jeremias* ("Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum A. T.").

and formulate the policy therein advocated in respect to business, marriage, etc.

Ezek. 33:21 f. 4. Consider the general effect which the news of the fall of Jerusalem must have had when it reached the ears of those who were already in captivity, among whom was Ezekiel.

See GUTHE, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, pp. 239 ff.

5. Note (1) that the period was one of transition, or, perhaps more truly, of revolution; one in which monolatry was to be supplanted by monotheism, idolatry by the sole worship of Jehovah; (2) that the principal scene of action was no longer Palestine, but Babylon; (3) that Israel was now scattered, the nationality broken; (4) that the work of the prophetic order was giving place to that of the priestly order; for Jeremiah and Ezekiel were priests, and the books of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, which follow, are far more priestly than prophetic (*cf.* § 34).

Jer. 1:1; Ezek. 1:3.

§ 183. **The Preparation of Ezekiel.**

1:3.[3] 1. Consider (1) the significance of the fact that he was a priest, and the great influence, at this time, of the priestly position, second only to that of the king; (2) the character of the training which he would receive; (3) the influence which must have been exercised over him by the book of Deuteronomy and by Jeremiah's sermons (see § 184).

22:25, 26; 4:14.

33:21; *cf.* 26:1 f. 2. Note (1) the fact that Ezekiel had been in captivity already eleven years[4] when news of the fall of Jerusalem was received; (2) the fact that the call came to him after five years' experience in captivity (592 B. C.); (3) the latest date in the book (570 B. C.).

1:2.

29:17.

[3] All Scripture references cited without name of book are from Ezekiel.

[4] 33:21 states that the tidings came in the twelfth year of the captivity; but we learn from 26:1 f. that Ezekiel already knew of the fall of Jerusalem in the eleventh year of the captivity. The Syriac version has *eleventh* year in 33:21 also, and this is probably correct. Jerusalem fell on the ninth day of the fourth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah's reign (2 Kings 25:2 f.; Jer. 39:2), which was also the eleventh year of the captivity, since Zedekiah was placed on the throne when Jehoiachin was removed to Babylon (2 Kings 24:15 ff.); and it is not reasonable to suppose that the captives in Babylon did not hear of the fall of their city until a year and a half after the event.

3. Study (1) the strange and wonderful character of the visions which constituted the call, including (*a*) the vision of God — what conceptions of God are implied in the four living creatures (vss. 5–14), the four wheels (vss. 15–21), the throne and glory (vss. 22–28)? (*b*) the prophet's introduction to his work by the God seen in the vision — the people a rebellious one, the inspiration accorded him, the special strength given him, his particular mission to the captives of Tel-abib, the precise character of his function, viz., to be a watchman ; (2) his later feeling of responsibility as a watchman.

1:4–28. 2:1 ff. 2:3–7. 2:8—3:3. 3:4–9. 3:10–15. 3:16–21. 33:1–9.

4. Examine, for the purpose of gaining a better point of view for an appreciation of his work, certain references to his life and activity in exile : (1) the character of the people with whom he was called to work; (2) his own character as Jehovah's spokesman ; (3) the fact that he was frequently consulted in his own house by the elders of Israel ; (4) his use of the death of his wife as an occasion for a public message ; (5) the threatening character of his early sermons; (6) the consolatory character of his later sermons ; (7) his place and standing among the exiles.

3:4–11, 26; 14:1–5. 11:25. 20:1; 8:1; 14:1–5. 24:15–18, 19–27. 33:30–33.

§ 184. **Ezekiel's Prophetic Work.** — For the better understanding of Ezekiel's work as a priest, and the priestly structure of which he was the author, it is important that his work as prophet should be appreciated. This is perhaps most easily considered in connection with that of Jeremiah.

1. Consider the degree of dependence which Ezekiel exhibits in relation to Jeremiah as seen in the following passages : 3 : 3, *cf.* Jer. 15 : 16 ; 3 : 17, *cf.* Jer. 6 : 17; 7 : 14, 27, *cf.* Jer. 4 : 5–9 ; chap. 13, *cf.* Jer. 14 : 13–16 ; 13 : 10, *cf.* Jer. 6 : 14 ; 16 : 51, *cf.* Jer. 3 : 11 ; chap. 18, *cf.* Jer. 31 : 29 f.; chap. 20, *cf.* Jer. 11 : 3–8 ; 24 : 16–23, *cf.* Jer. 16 : 3–9 ; chaps. 29–31, *cf.* Jer., chap. 46 ; chap. 34, *cf.* Jer. 23 : 1–4 ; 36 : 26, *cf.* Jer. 24 : 7; 37 : 24, *cf.* Jer. 30 : 9 ; 38 : 15, *cf.* Jer. 6 : 22.

See especially SMEND, *Der Prophet Ezechiel* ("Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch," 1880), pp. xxiv f.; C. H. TOY, art. "Ezekiel," *Encyclopædia Biblica*, Vol. II, col. 1462.

Chap. 18; *cf.* Deut. 24: 16; Jer. 31: 29 f.

33: 1–17.

17: 11–21; *cf.* Jer. 28: 12–17; 38: 14–23.

Chaps. 18, 22.

Chaps. 25–32.

2. Study (1) the place occupied in his preaching by the teaching of *individual responsibility* — does he elaborate the teaching of Jeremiah on this subject? does he give it any special application to the exiles? (2) his counsels concerning submission to Babylon and his predictions concerning Jerusalem's fall, as compared with those of Jeremiah.

3. Consider (1) his ethical and social teachings as enunciated, *e. g.*, in chaps. 18 and 22, and note their high character so far as concerns relations between Israelites; (2) his attitude toward the outside nations, to which no obligations are due, there being as yet no international code.

1: 26, 28; 10: 19; 34: 30; 37: 26 f.; 43: 7.

18: 28; 18: 5–8.

26: 20; 31: 14–17; 32: 17–32.

36: 26 f.

4. Consider, also, if possible, Ezekiel's conceptions concerning (1) *God* — how far does he sympathize with the older ideas, how far with the new? Is he a monotheist? or does he accept the existence of other deities? Is the conception of Jehovah as a universal God associated with the older idea of the tribal God? (2) *Man* — his inward life, his outward life, reward and punishment, the hereafter — *sheol*, transformation of the heart (regeneration); *cf.* Jer. 31: 33.

See TOY, art. "Ezekiel," *Encyclopædia Biblica*, Vol. II, cols. 1467 ff.

§ 185. **Ezekiel's Own Representations Concerning Chaps. 40–48.** — Frequent references are made by the prophet to the origin of the material contained in these chapters.

40: 1–4.

40: 17, 24, 28, 32, 48, etc.; 47: 1–5.

42: 13; 43: 6–12.

44: 5–8; 47: 6 ff.

43: 1–5; 44: 4.

42: 18; 44: 9; 45: 9; 46: 1, 16; 47: 13.

Consider the various statements: (1) the man with an appearance like brass and a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed — what or whom did this man symbolize? what was his function? what the purpose of his work? (2) the various steps in his guidance of the prophet; (3) the messages delivered from time to time in the progress of the journey; (4) the visions of divine glory revealed; (5) the use of the phrase, "thus saith the Lord God."

Formulate, upon the basis of this material, a statement covering the author's point of view on this question.

§ 186. **The Structure and General Character of Ezek., Chaps. 40–48.**

1. Note the contents of the section: (1) plans and specifications for the future temple; (2) the ordinances for the erection and dedication of the altar; (3) the law concerning the priesthood; (4) the sacred territory located and defined; (5) regulations in reference to sacrifices; (6) the function of "the prince," with special reference to his religious obligations; (7) the law providing special places for the cooking of the sacrifices offered by the people; (8) description of the living waters issuing from the temple; (9) a statement of the boundaries of the land and its allotment among the tribes, with especial provision for proselytes (47 : 22 f.); (10) the dimensions of the Holy City and the location of its twelve gates.

40:1—43:12. 43:13–27. 44:4–31. 45:1–5. 5:6–25. 44:1–3; 46:1–18. 46:19–24. 47:1–12. 47:13—48:29. 48:30–35.

2. Consider (1) that this material comes from a date twelve years later than any portion of the book[5] except 29:17, 18; (2) that there is in this section no "teaching" on any subject; (3) that there is given here a *picture* in which a people is represented as living in an ideal condition; (4) "that it does not describe how salvation is to be attained, for the salvation is realized and enjoyed; it describes the people and their condition and their life now that redemption has come;"[6] (5) that, with the temple occupying the central place, there are taken up questions relating to the priests, the sacrifices, the land including the Dead Sea, the division of territory, the laying out of the city; (6) that, in addition, there are the regulations regarding the functions of the "prince;" (7) that, in other words, it is an ideal state

40:1.

[5] Attention may be called here to the fact that the genuineness of the book or of certain parts of it has been called in question by some scholars; *e. g.*, ZUNZ, *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge der Juden* (2d ed.), pp. 165 ff., and in *ZDMG.*, Vol. XXVII, pp. 676 ff., places the whole book in the Persian period; SEINECKE, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, Vol. II (1884), pp. 1 ff., assigns it to the Maccabæan period; VOLZ, *Die vorexilische Jahweprophetie und der Messias* (1897), p. 84, note, regards the last nine chapters as the work of a disciple of Ezekiel. These views, however, have not met with any general acceptance.

[6] A. B. DAVIDSON, *The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel* (*Camb. Bible*, 1893), p. 288.

which is thus presented, a conception which constitutes the germ of the doctrine of the *kingdom of God.*

40:2; 43:3. 3. Consider, still further, (1) its form, namely *vision*, in contrast with the form of Deuteronomy, which was 45:1ff.; 46:1ff.; 47:21. the *sermonic;* (2) how, not infrequently, it lapses into the form of sermon or address to the people; (3) whether in *spirit* it more nearly resembles Deuteronomy or Leviticus; (4) the strange and confusing mingling of the natural and supernatural elements, and show the origin of this in the prophetic conception of life; (5) 39:25-29. the relation of this picture to the preceding context, in which Israel is represented as having now received the outpouring of the divine spirit — is it not the climax of the book?

§ 187. **The Principal Ideas** of the section deserve classification and formulation:

1. Note the statement, made above, to the effect that there were no "teachings" in the section; this does not mean, however, that the picture does not rest upon certain conceptions, or *imply* the truth of certain great ideas.

2. For a general statement of the ideas of Ezekiel in this section, see § 31. For the material on the priest, see §§ 65, 66; on the place of worship, §§ 77, 78; on sacrifice, §§ 89, 90; on feasts, § 102; on the sabbath, §§ 114, 115; on clean and unclean, §§ 128, 129.

3. Consider some of the more important of the great ideas that underlie the form of presentation employed in these closing chapters, keeping in mind constantly the necessity in many cases of basing our conclusions largely upon the general tone and character of the material rather than upon specific statements and texts. (1) The idea of God — what is the bearing upon this idea of (*a*) 45:1-8. the fact that the temple, Jehovah's house, is placed in the middle of the Holy Land and surrounded on all sides by the land of the priests, Jehovah's ministers, thus being kept from contact with everything profane and polluting? (*b*) 44:4-28. the stringent regulations concerning those who may approach Jehovah to offer sacrifice, and concerning their apparel, etc.? (*c*) the exclusion of foreigners from

the temple and of the laity from the inner court of the temple? Does not the whole representation in chaps. 40–48 give the impression of the great exaltation and holiness of Jehovah in comparison with everything human? (2) Jehovah's relation to Israel — note that Jehovah is represented as having restored his people to favor, and as requiring of them holiness in order that they may enjoy his favor forever. Note also the feeling of superiority over all foreigners that appears in the restrictions placed upon the latter, though provision is made for proselytes. Does not the spirit of particularism appear here very clearly? (3) The subordination of political to *religious* ideals — note (*a*) the fact that the "prince's" functions are almost wholly religious; (*b*) the exceedingly few non-religious matters that are dealt with; (*c*) the complete silence on all matters relating to national ambition or development; (*d*) the fact that the nation is represented rather as a community existing only for religious purposes; (*e*) the emphasis laid on the *ceremonial* as compared with the ethical side of the religious life. (4) The great emphasis laid upon the idea of atonement as an evidence of an increasing sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Is this not a correlative of the exalted idea of Jehovah's holiness?

43:1–5.

43:6–9; 48:35.

44:7, 9.

45:8–12; 46:16 ff.

43:21 ff.; 44:27; 45:17.

§ 188. **The General Relation of Ezek., Chaps. 40–48, to Deuteronomy.**

1. Consider the place of the priests in both sections, noting that Deuteronomy makes no distinction between priests and Levites, while Ezekiel degrades the Levites, gives the reasons for so doing, and restricts the priesthood to the sons of Zadok.

44:10–15; *cf.* Deut. 18:1–8.

2. Consider the comparative fulness in the treatment of (1) the duties of priests, (2) the provision made for the priests; does not this indicate a great advance in the conception of the place and dignity of the priesthood?

44:17–27; *cf.* Deut. 17:9.

44:29 f.; chaps. 45, 48; *cf.* Deut 18:1–4.

3. Consider the absence in Ezek., chaps. 40–48, as compared with Deuteronomy, of warnings against idolatry.

4. Consider the feasts as enumerated in Deuteronomy, the sacrificial details being absent; while in

Deut., chap. 16.

Ezek. 45:21-25. 45:18-20 (LXX). Ezekiel[7] the details of the material are given, and a special ceremony of purification of the sanctuary on the first day of the first and seventh months.

5. Consider the apparent failure of the Deuteronomic scheme in the catastrophe of the exile; for was not this Deut. 7:6. scheme intended for a "holy" people, and to serve as the expression of a people closely united with a "holy" God? Was it not intended to bring the people into a life which should be worthy of Jehovah, their Lord, and was not the destruction of Jerusalem understood to separate them from him?

6. Is not Ezekiel's scheme clearly prepared for a people restored from captivity, and not only restored, 36:24-28. but actually purified and regenerated? "It opens with an elaborate account of a new temple set on the sacred 40:1—43:12. hill. The 'law of the house' is expounded with much detail, and the prophet then announces the ordinances of the altar. These are followed in turn by regulations for the priesthood and the appropriate sacrifices, and a scheme of cultus is thus displayed by which the people, once more consecrated, shall be preserved from further temptation to unfaithfulness, and shall secure the presence of Jehovah in their midst forever."[8]

The relationship of Ezekiel's cultus to that of P will be considered in the next study.

§ 189. Literature to be Consulted.

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[7] Probably from oversight the Feast of Weeks is omitted.

[8] J. E. CARPENTER AND G. HARFORD-BATTERSBY, *The Hexateuch*, Vol. I, p. 127.

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